



October 13, 2006

## **Urciuoli, Driscoll guilty in corruption probe**

A federal jury today found former hospital executives **Robert A. Urciuoli** and **Frances P. Driscoll** guilty of charges that they corruptly employed former Rhode Island Senator John Celona to advance the interests of Roger Williams Medical Center in the General Assembly. The jury acquitted a third defendant, **Peter J. Sangermano, Jr.**, of all charges.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the verdicts, which the jury returned today following six days of deliberation and a three-week trial.

Urciuoli was President of Roger Williams Medical Center and Driscoll was, until 2000, the Medical Center's Vice President for Public Relations.

During the trial, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Luis M. Matos and Dulce Donovan presented evidence that Urciuoli hired Celona in 1998, ostensibly to work for the Village at Elmhurst, an assisted living center affiliated with Roger Williams. However, as the evidence showed, Urciuoli actually hired Celona to advance the Medical Center's political agenda and by doing so, deprived the citizens of Rhode Island of their right to Celona's honest services.

Between 1998 and 2004, Roger Williams paid Celona approximately \$260,000 in consultant fees and, in return, Celona took steps to kill bills deemed harmful to Roger Williams and to advance legislation that Urciuoli and Driscoll considered favorable.

At the direction of Urciuoli and Driscoll, Celona worked to kill legislation that would have prohibited medical center officials from serving on the board of a for-profit hospital in the event

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of a merger. He used his position as a state senator to try to persuade municipalities to increase ambulance runs to Roger Williams Medical Center. Celona also pressured medical insurance companies to increase their reimbursements to Roger Williams for health care services.

The jury found Urciuoli guilty of conspiracy and 35 counts of mail fraud. Conspiracy and 17 of the mail fraud counts carry maximum penalties of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Eighteen of the mail fraud counts have maximum penalties of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine (in July 2002, Congress increased the maximum penalty for mail fraud). The jury found Urciuoli not guilty of one count of mail fraud.

The jury found Driscoll not guilty of conspiracy but guilty of one count of mail fraud, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The jury acquitted Sangermano, a partner in the Village at Elmhurst, of conspiracy and 36 counts of mail fraud.

Urciuoli and Driscoll remain free on bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for March 9, 2007.

In September 2005, Celona pled guilty to federal fraud charges. He testified for the government at the trial and is free on bond pending sentencing.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Rhode Island State Police conducted the investigation.

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